



The rejection of claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,783,969 to Tang et al. ("Tang") is respectfully traversed. Beyond the reasons set forth in the Prior Amendment, applicants submit that this rejection is improper, because Tang is not prior art. As set forth in the accompanying Declaration of Muktar A. Mahajan and Herbert H. Samuels, Under 37 CFR § 1.131, the claimed isolated human nucleic acid molecule was invented by applicants prior to March 5, 2001. Therefore, the rejection based on Tang cannot be maintained and should be withdrawn.

In view of all of the foregoing, it is submitted that this case is in condition for allowance and such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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